



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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Review Committee
Governor's University Research Initiative
Office of the Governor
State Insurance Building
1100 San Jacinto Boulevard
Agency: 301

Dear Members of the Review Committee:

Please accept this letter in support of and commitment to the nomination of Dr. Charles Nemeroff for a Governor's University Research Initiative (GURI) award. Dr. Nemeroff, a member of the Academy of Medicine since 2002, is being recruited as a professor with tenure within the Department of Psychiatry at the Dell Medical School. Specifically, Dr. Nemeroff is being recruited for his expertise in mood disorders as part of the University of Texas's efforts to build world-class clinical and research programming in the Mulva Clinic for the Neurosciences. Dr. Nemeroff is a world leader in the impact of stress, particularly early life adversity, on brain development and the emergence of mental illness as well as the neurobiology and treatment of major depression. He is being recruited to establish the Institute for Early Life Adversity Research, a multidisciplinary team of investigators focused on addressing the biological, medical and psychiatric consequences of early-life adversity, child abuse and neglect.

Dr. Nemeroff's research centers on understanding the neurobiological basis of affective, anxiety and stress disorders. Most recently, his research has focused on the use of genetic, neuroendocrine, neuroimaging and neurochemical methods to understand the pathophysiology of depression and PTSD (two conditions which are commonly linked). In particular, he is studying the neurobiological mechanisms that mediate the increased risk for depression and PTSD in victims of child abuse. He has served as Principal Investigator of two prestigious NIMH Conte Center grants, two U19 center grants on drug development and a center grant (CIDAR) on Prediction of Antidepressant Response. He currently serves as PI of an NIH grant on identifying predictors of PTSD in trauma victims and was recently awarded another in which he is collaborating with UT Senior Scientist Frances Champagne.

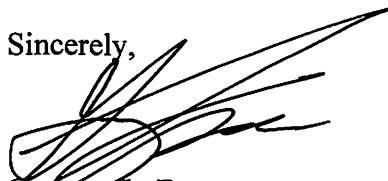
In his role as the Director of the Institute for Early-Life Adversity Research at Dell Medical School, Dr. Nemeroff will lead the effort in utilizing a multi-faceted approach to address prevention, pathophysiology and treatment of children, adolescents and adults. This uniquely diverse research effort will require coordination of investigators with diverse backgrounds and

experience from preclinical laboratory animal research to community intervention studies. Dr. Nemeroff has led such large efforts in the past, particularly on large NIH-funded center grants. In addition to his role in establishing this new Institute, Dr. Nemeroff will play an integral role in further shaping the development of research and clinical expertise in the Department of Psychiatry, the Mulva Clinic for the Neurosciences and the Dell Medical School. He will serve in an advisory capacity to Dean Clay Johnston, helping to advance the planning and execution needed to realize the vision of his leadership. While he will be bringing his own NIH funded projects, his work with colleagues he will recruit to the Institute and with existing faculty in the neurosciences and cognate fields will undoubtedly yield additional research grants and treatment/intervention programs, not just in the Dell Medical School, but at the University of Texas at Austin and with other partners both state and nation-wide.

In addition to his skills as a scientist, Dr. Nemeroff is a wonderful mentor. His faculty strongly support him and benefit enormously from his guidance. His impressive publication record is made possible in part by the many talented individuals he mentors who include him on papers as their work matures. Many of his mentees have gone on subsequently to have very successful independent research careers across the world, as evidence by the first author lists on papers where Dr. Nemeroff served as senior scientist. Dr. Nemeroff was just recently awarded the ACNP Julius Axelrod Mentorship Award, one of the highest awards in his field that acknowledges supporting the development of young scientists. He also directs the new investigator colloquium for the American Psychiatry Association in support of their efforts to continue to build a strong psychiatric research workforce, especially physician scientists.

We have an enormous opportunity with Dr. Nemeroff's recruitment to bring to UT Austin's Dell Medical School a world-class scientist, physician and mentor. The creation of the Institute for Early-Life Adversity Research will be the first of its kind in Texas. Since Texas unfortunately suffers with high rates of maternal mortality, child abuse and neglect, and suicide, and as there are few centers in the United States that focus on early life trauma and its consequences, this Institute will place the University of Texas at Austin at the forefront of research in this burgeoning area. It will serve as the nidus of the state efforts in reducing child abuse and neglect, working closely with UT Southwestern, UT San Antonio, UTMB as well as with Texas A&M. It is with enthusiasm that I nominate Dr. Nemeroff for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory L. Fennes', written over a horizontal line.

Gregory L. Fennes
President

GLF: rlb

cc: Dr. Maurie McInnis, Executive Vice President and Provost